



# CASE STUDY: MILITARY VS CANCER



## BUSINESS & STRATEGIC PLANNING

Military vs Cancer is a South Yorkshire-based charity with a nationwide mission to provide vital, practical support to individuals and families within the military community affected by cancer.

The charity offers financial grants at the point of diagnosis or beyond, that's tailored to the unique pressures military families face during a cancer diagnosis. These funds could be used for home adaptations, respite breaks, memory-making trips, or additional nursing care.

Funds are raised through a mix of events, including summer balls and participation in public fundraising activities like marathons. Their efforts are grounded in a strong belief in community, camaraderie, and the power of practical help to bring hope to those they support.

## The issue

Since its establishment, Military vs Cancer has experienced impressive growth, expanding its reach and deepening its impact across the UK. Public awareness increased, fundraising efforts gathered pace, and new partnerships strengthened its position as a key support organisation for members of the armed forces community affected by cancer.

However, as the charity matured, it became clear that expert guidance was needed to turn big ideas into a clear and deliverable plan. The team had vision and energy but lacked the experience and tools to translate that into a strategic roadmap. They needed help to assess what was feasible, prioritise effectively, and set out a path for sustainable growth.

## The solution

Following a professional referral, Military vs Cancer approached Cranfield Trust to support developing a 3–5-year business plan. The aim was to bring structure to all areas of the charity's work, clearly reviewing its current position, defining aims and objectives, and setting out achievable targets, milestones, and timelines.

Cranfield Trust's Regional Manager, Adam Wilkins, met with the charity to understand its needs and explore how best to support it. Based on this, Adam introduced the charity to Cranfield Trust volunteer Denis Oakley, an experienced professional with expertise in strategic planning, business management, financial analysis, and executive coaching. Denis brought a wealth of knowledge to help the charity shape its future direction and achieve its long-term goals.

Denis met with the charity team and began by clearly understanding its background, recent growth, future ambitions, and financial position. He ran planning workshops with the founder and leadership team to explore ideas, clarify growth objectives, and assess the most effective way forward.

The goal was to develop a focused, realistic business plan to support income generation, strengthen financial planning, and provide clear guidance around grant distribution.



**"Our small charity has gained valuable skills and knowledge that will enable us to grow in a focused and manageable way - something that would not have been possible without the support of Cranfield Trust."**  
**David and Shelley Bathgate, Founders**

## The impact

With Denis's support, Military vs Cancer successfully transformed its ambitions into a clear, practical business plan that provided the structure and direction the charity needed to grow sustainably and continue delivering vital support to the military community.

The comprehensive 3–5 year plan combined all aspects of the charity's work. It offered a critical review of their current position and set out a clear roadmap for the future, with defined aims, objectives, timelines, and practical actions to track progress.

## The impact continued

Growth opportunities were explored in areas such as strategic partnerships, fundraising, service expansion, and public awareness. The plan also addressed potential challenges and proposed strategies to overcome them. Financial planning was a key focus, with detailed annual budget breakdowns and clear financial objectives.

As a result of the project, the team reported feeling far better equipped to understand the impact of their decisions and how to steer the organisation forward with greater confidence. They described themselves as a “much more prepared charity” with a solid foundation for growth and the capacity to support more beneficiaries. The plan clarified scaling events and programmes, while identifying the resources needed to meet growing demand.

Denis’s contribution was described as invaluable, helping the team achieve far more than they had anticipated. They openly acknowledged how underprepared they had been initially, but felt fully supported throughout the process. The structured approach was both eye-opening and empowering, and the final reports offered a clear framework for continued improvement.

With Cranfield Trust’s expert guidance, Military vs Cancer made significant strides in strengthening its internal operations, improving efficiency, and establishing a more robust governance structure, laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability and impact.



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